

Residential Maintenance and Repairs

There are a variety of home maintenance and repair activities routinely carried out by homeowners in King County that have the potential to adversely affect our streams, rivers, and lakes. Pollutants generated from these activities can affect whether a lake or water body is swimmable or fishable. Painting, pressure washing, carpet cleaning, moss control, and concrete repair and maintenance are a few examples of activities homeowners conduct that can result in pollutants being discharged to drainage systems, surface water, and ground water. Wash water from these activities contain chemicals, suspended solids, organic compounds, detergents, solvents, abnormal pH, and other toxins that have a detrimental and toxic effect on fish and other aquatic life.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

The following BMPs, or equivalent measures, methods or practices are required when conducting residential maintenance and repairs at your home.

1

Do not dispose of any wastewater into the street, gutter, storm drain, or drainage ditch, or into a stream, creek, or other body of water.

2

PAINTING: Do not dispose of wash water from cleaning brushes, paint rollers, paint buckets, or containers to surface water, storm drains, or ditches. Wash water from latex paints can be disposed of to the sanitary sewer. Empty containers of latex paint can be left open to dry out any residual paint, and then disposed of in your normal garbage or taken to a transfer station for disposal. Residual oil based paint, paint thinners, and solvents must be disposed of as hazardous waste.

See <http://www.govlink.org/hazwaste/house/products/list.cfm> and http://www.govlink.org/hazwaste/publications/Paint_CommonWastes.pdf for information on the proper disposal of paint and solvent waste.

3

PRESSURE WASHING: Water from pressure washing decks, driveways, roofs, or other hard surfaces may contain suspended solids and other pollutants that should not be directly discharged to drainage systems. Redirect pressure washing wastewater to vegetated areas or areas such as gravel, lawns, landscaping, or bare soil where the water will infiltrate slowly into the ground. If this cannot be accomplished, filter the wash water through filter fabric, or other filtering media to collect the

suspended solids before discharging the water to a drainage system. If any chemicals are used during the pressure washing process, the wastewater must be collected and disposed of in a sanitary sewer system or infiltrated on site. If moss control or another chemical treatment is used during pressure washing of roofs, disconnect the downspouts so the chemicals do not discharge to the storm drainage system, and disperse the wash water onto adjacent lawns and landscaping.

4

CARPET CLEANING: Most commercial carpet cleaners have onboard wastewater recycling systems. If you do your own carpet cleaning, the wash water must be discharged to the sanitary sewer or your septic system. Filter the water if it contains lint or other particles to avoid clogging the drains. If you prefer not to discharge the water to your septic system, you may also discharge the water to your lawn or a landscaped area to allow the washwater to infiltrate slowly into the ground. Be aware that detergents and other cleaning chemicals such as solvents can be harmful to vegetation and septic systems. Discharging wash water to the ground may not be allowed if you live in a Critical Aquifer Recharge Area (CARA). Never dispose of carpet cleaning wash water to a storm drain, drainage ditch, or surface water. Carpet cleaning wastewater contains chemicals, detergents, and suspended solids that adversely impact the quality of surface and ground waters.

5

CEMENT/CONCRETE WORK: Concrete/cement wash water has a pH level that is toxic to aquatic life. Do not allow wash water from concrete work to discharge into storm drainage systems or adjacent roadways. This is especially important when installing washed aggregate driveways or patios. Direct the wash water to vegetated areas or dig a hole where the wash water can settle and infiltrate slowly into the ground. The cement residue can be mixed into the soil where the wash water is infiltrated with no detrimental effects, and the pH will be neutralized.

OTHER OPTIONS AND TIPS

1

Hire a professional home maintenance and repair company that follows the approved BMPs for home repair and maintenance, as adopted by King County. If you have questions about which Best Management Practices a business must comply with contact King County Water and Land Resources at 206-296-1900 or see <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/stormwater>.

Remember, as a homeowner, you have a responsibility to ensure your contractors follow the required Best Management Practices. As part of your agreement with contractors, require them to follow all King County Codes and regulations.